



March 19, 2007

H.R. 1021– Taunton, Massachusetts Special Resources Study Act

Floor Situation

H.R. 1021 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) on February 13, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

H.R. 1021 is expected to be considered by the House on March 19, 2007.

**Note: Identical legislation, Taunton, Massachusetts Special Resources Study Act (H.R. 1512), passed in the House of Representatives by voice vote on June 27, 2005. H.R. 1512 was received but never considered in the Senate.*

Summary

H.R. 1021 directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating certain historic buildings and areas in Taunton, Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System.

The study will be based on analysis, documentation, and determinations regarding whether the historic areas in Taunton:

- can be managed, curated, interpreted, restored, preserved, and presented as an organic whole under management by the National Park Service or under an alternative management structure;
- have an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use;
- reflect traditions, customs, beliefs, and historical events that are valuable parts of the national story;
- provide outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, architectural, or scenic features;
- provide outstanding recreational and educational opportunities; and

- can be managed by the National Park Service in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and State and local governments to develop a unit of the National Park System consistent with State and local economic activity.

H.R. 1021 requires the Secretary of the Interior to submit a report to Congress no later than 3 fiscal years after the date on which funds are first made available for this Act.

The recommendation must include a discussion of private land owner concerns.

Background

The city of Taunton, Massachusetts, is home to 9 distinct historic districts, with more than 600 properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Included among these are the Church Green Historic District, the Courthouse Historic District, the Taunton Green Historic District, and the Reed and Barton Historic District.

Taunton Green is the site where the Sons of Liberty first raised the Liberty and Union Flag in 1774, an event that helped to spark a popular movement, culminating in the American Revolution.

Robert Treat Paine, a citizen of Taunton, and the first Attorney General of Massachusetts, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Taunton was a leading community in the Industrial Revolution, and its industrial area has been the site of many innovations in such industries as silver manufacture, paper manufacture, and ship building.

The landscaping of the Courthouse Green was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who also left landscaping ideas and plans for other areas in the city which have great value and interest as historical archives and objects of future study.

Main Street, which connects many of the historic districts, is home to the Taunton City Hall and the Leonard Block building, 2 outstanding examples of early 19th Century American architecture, as well as many other historically and architecturally significant structures.

The city and people of Taunton have preserved many artifacts, gravesites, and important documents dating back to 1638 when Taunton was founded.

Cost

H.R. 1021 has not been scored by the Congressional Budget Office. However, CBO scored identical legislation from the 108th Congress, H.R. 2129, as costing less than \$200,000 over the next three years to complete the required study and report, subject to appropriation.

Staff Contact

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